



SUCCESS STORY

Better Health Habits for Healthier Future

Planning for a better future today ... guarantees a better tomorrow.



Photo: JHCP Project

School students acting out the facts of dental health.

55 schools trained to become Health Competent.

Healthy habits are picked up from childhood, and what better time to embed the knowledge for these actions than during school. Over the course of one school year, five pilot schools led the Health Competent Schools Initiative in Jordan; the next year 50 other schools followed. The initiative focuses on five key themes: personal hygiene, physical fitness, nutrition, anti-tobacco life and family planning.

The faculty and administration at these schools were trained and supervised in the implementation of several activities which included skits, songs, festivals, competitions and crafts. They were provided with brochures and posters to support the messages. The 55 schools are considered "health competent" with regards to their curriculum, snacks available at schools and hygiene; they needed to follow a checklist of characteristics in order to be awarded the accreditation.

The Ministry of Education played a key role as healthy lifestyle messages were added to lessons in the five health education books from the curriculum of grades 11 and 12.

A whole chapter titled "Communication Skills" was developed by USAID and added to the grade 11 health education curriculum textbook. Moreover, the "Our Health, Our Responsibility" slogan developed under USAID's project was adopted by the Ministry of Education and placed on the cover of all the health education textbooks. The first Arabic health web portal www.sehetna.com was also recognized as an accurate source of health information.

A special tool "Passport to My Future" was developed to entertainingly educate students in grades 11 and 12 to put ideas on paper about their health and future. The Passport contained educational activities and included open-ended questions about plans for their future.

These additions and changes not only educate the students, but also train them to become "agents of change" in their schools, homes and communities through empowering them with the knowledge, skills and resources to spread the knowledge beyond our arms reach.

Planning for a better future today, guarantees a better tomorrow...that is why we are starting now. Already students from these schools have started adopting healthy behavior practices.